

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 292209

64

ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:NEA:EABINGTON:CF

APPROVED BY:NEA:EABINGTON

S/S: SSTEINER

----- 058831

O 010202Z DEC 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 292209

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT BEIRUT 8661 ACTION SECSTATE DTD 30 NOV 76.

QTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 8661

EXDIS

FOR ATHERTON FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, LE

SUBJECT: DEPLOYMENT OF ASF FORCES IN SOUTHERN LEBANON

REF: BEIRUT 8652

1. SUMMARY. RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH PRESIDENT SARKIS HAVE MADE CLEAR THAT THERE IS NO LEBANESE FORCE HE CAN USE NOW TO ESTABLISH SECURITY IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. SINCE IT IS CLEARLY IN THE INTEREST OF THE US, LEBANON, AND ISRAEL THAT PRESIDENT SARKIS ESTABLISH HIS AUTHORITY IN THIS AREA, PARTICULARLY TYRE AND NABATIYAH, AS HE HAS IN THE REST OF LEBANON, ISRAEL SHOULD CONCUR IN THE DEPLOYMENT OF LIMITED ASF FORCES IN THIS AREA. END SUMMARY.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 292209

2. IN RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH THE CHARGE, PRESIDENT SARKIS

HAS MADE CLEAR THAT HE DOES NOT HAVE AND CANNOT QUICKLY CREATE A LEBANESE FORCE CAPABLE OF ESTABLISHING SECURITY IN LEBANON SOUTH OF THE SIDON-JAZZIN AXIS. HE IS FULLY AWARE OF THE NEED TO STATION LEBANESE FORCES, LOYAL ONLY TO HIM, IN THIS AREA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BUT IT WILL TAKE SOME TIME FOR HIM TO CREATE SUCH A FORCE. THE CHRISTIAN-SHIA MILITIA NOW IN BEING ALONG THE ISRAELI-LEBANESE BORDER ARE STRICTLY HOME GUARDS; THEY MAY, WITH ISRAELI SUPPORT, BE ABLE TO PREVENT THEIR VILLAGES FROM BEING USED AS JUMPING-OFF POINTS FOR RAIDS AGAINST ISRAEL BUT THEY ARE MUCH TOO WEAK TO CONTROL THE ARMED PALESTINAINS IN THE SIDON-TYRE-NABATIYH TRIANGLE, EVEN IF THEY COULD BE PERSUADED TO LEAVE HOME. THE CHRISTIAN FORCES IN AYN IBL, IN SOUTHEAST LEBANON, HAVE ALL THEY CAN DO IN CONFRONTING THE PALESTINIAN/LAA COMBINATION IN BINT JBAYL, EVEN WITH ISRAELI SUPPORT, AND THE CHRISTIAN FORCES IN QULAY'A/MARJAYUN AREA ARE SIMILARLY FACED BY PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST FORCES.

3. EVEN IF CHRISTIAN LEBANESE ARMY FORCES WERE AVAILABLE TO ESTABLISH SECURITY IN SOUTHERN LEBANON, IT WOULD BE POLITICALLY EXTREMELY RISKY FOR PRESIDENT SARKIS TO TRY TO USE THEM. MOST OF THESE FORCES HAVE PUT THEMSELVES UNDER THE COMMAND OF HANNA SA'ID, THE NOMINAL COMMANDER OF THE LEBANESE ARMY. SA'ID IS CONSIDERED THROUGHOUT LEBANON AS CHAMOUN'S MAN, A COLLABORATOR WITH ISRAEL, AND IS THOROUGHLY DISCREDITED NOT ONLY IN THE EYES OF THOSE WHO HAVE FOUGHT ON THE MUSLIM/LEFTIST/PALESTINIAN SIDE IN THE RECENT WAR BUT ALSO IN THE EYES OF THE GREAT BULK OF THE LEBANESE ARMY OFFICERS AND MEN WHO REFUSED TO TAKE SIDES AND SIMPLY WENT HOME. IF SARKIS WERE TO DESIGNATE THE LEBANESE ARMY COMMANDED BY SA'ID AS HIS CHOSEN INSTRUMENT, HE WOULD FORFEIT THE SUPPORT OF THESE OFFICERS WHOSE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION HE DESPARATELY NEEDS TO REBUILD THE ARMY. SUCH A STEP WOULD ALSO GIVE CHAMOUN A POSITION OF LEVERAGE VIS-A-VIS SARKIS WHICH WOULD RENDER SARKIS' EFFORTS TO EFFECT NATIONAL POLITICAL RECONCILIATION MUCH MORE DIFFICULT. KNOWING THIS, SARKIS HAS REPORTEDLY ASKED SA'ID TO RESIGN. SA'ID, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 292209

PROTECTED BY CHAMOUN, WHO IS STILL NAMINALLY MINISTER OF DEFENSE, HAS SO FAR REFUSED TO DO SO.

4. ON THE OTHER HAND, SOME FORCE IS NEEDED IN THE SIDON/NABATIYAH/TYRE TRIANGLE IMMEDIATELY TO REPRESENT THE CENTRAL AUTHORITY OF PRESIDENT SARKIS AND TO CONTROL THE PALESTINIAN/LEBANESE LEFTIST ELEMENTS. AS INDICATED REFTTEL, SARKIS IS UNDER STRONG PRESSURE

TO SHUT OFF THE PORT OF TYRE AS A SOURCE OF SUPPLY TO THE PALESTINIANS AND LEBANESE LEFTISTS. SOME REPORTS INDICATE THAT CHEMOUN HAS MADE HIS SUPPORT FOR THE ASF ACTION TO CONFISCATE HEAVY WEAPONS FROM THE CHRISTIAN FIGHTING GROUPS CONDITIONAL ON THE ELIMINATION OF THIS SOURCE OF SUPPLY TO HIS ENEMIES. IN ADDITION RECENT IR'S HAVE INDICATED THAT AS THE ASF HAS TAKEN CONTROL IN THE REST OF LEBANON, MANY PALESTINIAN FIGHTING UNITS, INCLUDING IRAQIS AND REJECTIONISTS, HAVE MOVED SOUTH OF ZAHRANI, TO SARAFAND FOR EXAMPLE, AND ALONG THE ROAD TO NABATIYAH. THE MAJOR CONCENTRATION OF FEDAYEEN IS NOW IN THIS AREA. IN THE ABSENCE OF A RESTRAINING FORCE, THESE ELEMENTS ARE FREE TO DO AS THEY WISH AND THE REVUGEE CAMPS AROUND TYRE MAY BECOME HOT BEDS OF PALESTINIAN MILITARY ACTIVITY. THE ASF IS THE ONLY FORCE AVAILABLE THAT HAS THE CAPABILITY OF ESTABLISHING THE NECESSARY CONTROL. AN ASF PRESENCE IN THIS AREA CANNOT ELIMINATE COMPLETELY THE POSSIBILITY OF ISOLATED ATTACKS AGAINST ISRAEL, SUCH AS THE NAHARIYAH INCIDENT; AS SYRIAN FM KHADDAM HAS POINTED OUT, SUCH ATTACKS CAN BE STAGED BY ONE MAN CARRYING A SUITCASE. IT WOULD, HOWEVER, PROVIDE A BASIC CONTROL OVER THE AREA FROM WHICH THESE ATTACKS ARE STAGED AND ACT AS A DETERRENT ON MORE SERIOUS MILITANT PALESTINIAN ACTIONS FROM THIS AREA.

5. WE AGREE WITH DAMASCUS 8016 THAT IT IS DISINGENUOUS AT BEST OF ISRAEL TO COMPLAIN ABOUT ATTACKS AND THREATS AGAINST IT FROM LEBANESE TERRITORY WHILE OBJECTING TO MOVES BY SARKIS AND THE ASF FORCES THAT COULD HELP TO PREVENT THESE ATTACKS. IF SYRIAN ASF FORCES WERE PLANNING TO SET UP A LINE ON THE ISRAELI-LEBANESE BORDER, ISRAELI CONCERNS WOULD BE UNDERSTANDABLE, BUT IT IS HARD TO SEE HOW THE STATIONING OF A FORCE SUCH
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 292209

AS ONE BATTALION IN TYRE, WHICH IS 25 KILOMETERS FROM ISRAELI-LEBANESE BORDER, AND TWO MORE SPREAD ALONG THE ROAD FROM ZAHRANI TO NABATIYAH TO MARJAYUN CAN THREATEN ISRAEL'S SECURITY. ON THE CONTRARY, THE BENEFITS OF HAVING ASF FORCES IN THESE AREAS ARE SUBSTANTIAL BOTH FOR LEBANON AND FOR ISRAEL -- THE PORT OF TYRE COULD NO LONGER BE USED TO SUPPLY PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST FORCES, PRESIDENT SARKIS' CONTROL OF THE SECURITY SITUATION IN LEBANON WOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED, AND PALESTINIAN ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA COULD BE MONITORED AND RESTRAINED.

6. THE USG HAS REPEATEDLY STATED THAT WE SUPPORT "THE SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF LEBANON, ITS NATIONAL UNITY AND COHESION." ON NOVEMBER 29, THE

DEPARTMENT'S PRESS SPOKESMAN STATED THAT "WE ARE MAINTAINING OUR CLEAR SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT SARKIS' ESTABLISHMENT OF HIS AUTHORITY THROUGHOUT LEBANON." THE ONLY DEPENDABLE INSTRUMENT THAT PRESIDENT SARKIS NOW HAS AT HIS DISPOSAL TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS IS THE ASF, PUT UNDER HIS CONTROL BY THE ARAB LEAGUE AND COMMANDED BY A LEBANESE OFFICER. THIS EMBASSY THEREFORE STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT THE USG ASSURE THAT ISRAEL ACQUIESCE IN PRESIDENT SARKIS' USE OF THIS FORCE TO ESTABLISH HIS AUTHORITY IN TYRE AND ALONG THE ZAHRANI, NABATIYAH, MARJAYUN AXIS, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE ASF WILL BE REPLACED BY A LEBANESE FORCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

7. SUGGEST DEPT PASS THIS MESSAGE AND REFTTEL TO DAMASCUS AND TEL AVIV.

LANE

UNQTE: ROBINSON

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TROOP DEPLOYMENT, PALESTINIANS, MILITARY OCCUPIED AREAS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE292209
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: NEA:EABINGTON:CF
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760444-0472
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761282/aaaactjy.tel
Line Count: 187
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 76 BEIRUT 8652
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUN 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <04 OCT 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEPLOYMENT OF ASF FORCES IN SOUTHERN LEBANON
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, LE, SY
To: CAIRO
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006